

No matter how fascinating, every book leaves the reader with unfulfilled wishes. In this particular case, I found the description of the Chinese networks at the top rather meager, quantitative data few and far between, and the choice of 1860 as a starting point arbitrary. However, I am fully aware that the most logical choice — 1809 — would have doubled the research time needed to cover the entire period.

Finally there is one factual error to be corrected. On page 34, the author states that around 1880 only five per cent of Java's population had been vaccinated against smallpox. What he means is that around that time five per cent of the population was vaccinated *annually*, namely all children born since the year before! As this programme had been started in the early decades of the century, around 1880 almost 100 per cent of the population had been vaccinated once, and a large proportion more than once. In the struggle against smallpox the Dutch were certainly more successful than in their half-hearted battles against opium.

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**LIA: Das grosse Ritual auf den Mentawai-Inseln.** By REIMAR SCHEFOLD. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1988. Pp. 695. Illustrations, Bibliography, Indices.

The title of this voluminous book is an understatement, since the first half of the text offers a detailed monograph of the *uma* (house and local clan group) Sakuddei in the Southwestern part of Siberut, the northernmost island of the Mentawai archipelago. The author gives information on the island, on the Sakuddei ideas of the cosmos, the little we know of the history of settlement of the archipelago, the *uma* as house and group and as a symbolic world. There are chapters on the ways of providing food and "material culture", on life cycles and roles, on the group including information on property, individual and society, and conflicts. Information is given also on intergroup relations, on kinship and on religious ideas (of a book on those the author holds out a prospect). Presented as background for the presentation and interpretation of the *pulaijat*, the central ritual of the Sakkudei, this part would have been adequate as a book in itself. Lots of minor and major points are worth discussing: the old discussion on the historical position of Mentawai culture, which "lacks" basic Indonesian elements like growing cereals, making pottery, metal working and others. While this would make Mentawai look "neolithic" there is another position interpreting this lack as secondary. Not discussed are other elements like the myth (p. 70) of the hero shooting into the sky to get rid of the heat of the sun, which is a classical Chinese motif, or the mnemotechnic device of learning the slitdrum sequences by learning vowel series, a technique of apparently Indian origin. Interesting, too, is the close relationship a man has towards his MB (p. 261), which however does in no way extend to MBD. There is material for those interested in factors leading to the splitting of societies of shifting cultivators. Conflict often plays a role, in myth as well as in everyday life. Sometimes it is conflict about trees (pp. 93, 139, 218), the claim on which in my view seems to lie at the beginning of property claims. Very strong is the pressure to behave in an egalitarian way (pp. 221–29). Holding back and eating food which should be distributed will cause illness. For those interested in distribution and exchange the

book is invaluable for its detailed information. One point is that knowledge can be exchanged and even sold (p. 292). The Sakuddei have a strong ecological consciousness, which in a general way stresses harmony, and more specifically leads people to reconcile with nature when something has been taken from her. Also something that still can be used may not be destroyed or thrown away. Connected with these ideas towards nature is the prevailing application of the *refrigerium*, the cooling of places or situations considered hot and (potentially) dangerous. This is an almost pan-Indonesian idea as well as the technique of letting something drift downstream to get rid of it. This is done by the Sakuddei when they want to get rid of a water spirit who punishes those who eat of the meat which should go into distribution.

A basic Sakuddei idea is that souls are very sensitive, delicate, and touchy. They are especially fond of leading a beautiful life and much is done to please them. There is always a danger of losing one's soul if it is hurt or not properly cared for or attracted by something or someone else.

The second part of the book (part III–VII) is devoted to the description and interpretation of one of the three *pulaiijat*-rituals the author observed. In the introduction to the book Schefold makes clear that he is considering ritual in much the same way as Victor Turner. After presenting different ways of looking at rituals, in their telic aspects, as reflections of society, representing the world view or ethos of a society, all of which he regards as insufficient, Schefold is especially critical about the view of the ritual as the dramatic arrangement of myth. This view has been prevalent in much of the anthropology of religion, where it gave rise to the idea of “meaningless rites” when it seemed impossible to find a corresponding myth to serve as a libretto. A *pulaiijat* lasting twenty days would have to be declared void of “inner” meaning since during the whole ritual only one figure from the Sakuddei corpus of myths appears. For Schefold ritual is a discourse by itself. It has to do with everyday life, it can have to do with myth, it can be a reflection of the social organization, but it is not as simple as that. Rather is it the task of the anthropologist to understand the vocabulary of a given ritual. Instead of looking for the absolute meaning of a given act or object one should try to understand the associative meanings of acts and objects in a specific ritual. These meanings can come close to archetypes, but there is no regular relationship with them. On the contrary, Schefold stresses the relativistic position. Ritual is not *parole* built on a generative stratum, it is the recitation of an existing *parole*. Or, to sum it up: “Messages that are conveyed are imparted by the participants to themselves in a kind of collective soliloquy” (transl. W.M.).

It is on these premises that the *pulaiijat* is described and interpreted. Among the Sakuddei, activities can be located on a wide scale which ranges from predominantly practical work to predominantly religious work. Depending on their position on this scale, activities will be more or less religious. After the building of a canoe an incantation is sufficient to round up this activity. Others like clearing a field will need rituals which last a whole day. Still others are considered to be so important that an additional communal ritual of cleaning and strengthening is appropriate. This ritual is the *pulaiijat*. Taken all together it usually lasts for about a month. It has to be carried out in a beautiful way, since not only do people like this but their souls will feel attracted and stay with people. It is for the souls that the *pulaiijat* is arranged. There is a strong relationship with hunting involved, demonstrating the importance of the surrounding nature for the survival of the Sakuddei. No economic activities are allowed

during a *puliaijat*, food and firewood have to be organized beforehand. The whole *uma* takes part in the ritual, which is too complicated to be summed up, but shows an extreme mobility of the participants, splitting and getting together, moving to the forest, coming home to the *uma*. It is also a gigantic combination of incantations, hundreds of which are given in the text, offerings and sacrifices, gestures and positions. As far as I can see Schefold has provided us with the most detailed description of one ritual of any one society in Indonesia. Having done this he makes a careful reading of what he saw and heard and what was told him afterwards. He is trying to “bring things together” and he provides us, among many other things, with basic classifications. But these always are more than verbal organizations of the world in well-established compartments. Rather does Schefold demonstrate how ideas and actions and things are combined, can be put in opposition, can be inversed. In that he does not push the level of abstraction too high, Schefold allows the reader not only to get an intimate knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of a ritual, but also to get a sense of its pervasive beauty.

A short chapter is devoted to conversations the author had at a later date with three different groups of people on his results. This is not a restudy, but in the simple sense of the word a re-thinking of what he thought with those people who lived through the ritual.

Reimar Schefold, to whom we owe already books, articles and films on Mentawai, has given us a veritable *opus magnum* in the anthropology of Indonesia.

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**The Road to Madiun. The Indonesia Communist Uprising of 1948.** By ANN SWIFT. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, 1989. Pp. xii, 116. Illustrations, Appendices, Bibliography, Index.

An authoritative and exhaustive study of the 1948 P.K.I. revolt, an event of crucial significance in modern Indonesian history, is long overdue. Unfortunately this Cornell dissertation by Anne Swift, completed in 1972 and finally published in 1989, apparently without any revision, turns out to be extremely disappointing. The moderate hope raised in the preface that the book: “... will add a bit to the knowledge of the period...”, might have been realized, but certainly nothing else beyond that!

The story starts off with a succinct description of the configuration of political forces in Java early in 1948. No new data or vistas emerge. Moreover, the history of the two major antagonists, the government allied Armed Forces and the P.K.I., is rather scantily treated, ignoring some of the major published works (e.g. Ulf Sundhaussen's *The Road to Power: Indonesian Military Politics, 1945–1967* [Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982]). Treading a well-worn path, the next section deals with the fall of the Amir Sjarifuddin Left-Coalition (Sayap Kiri) and its replacement by Hatta's presidential cabinet. Chapter III, which describes the mounting opposition to the Hatta-Sukarno government, again has a decidedly *deja vu* flavour about it. More worthwhile is chapter IV, in which the actual revolt is treated and wide use is made of contemporary Indonesian newspapers. It contains a biography of Musso and a